

## **'Usefulness' of Library Information Literacy programs designed for the undergraduates' reference to the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka**

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### **Abstract**

*With Collaboration of all Wayamaba University academic librarians, study was designed which increased students' information research skills, their awareness of other sources of technical information, and their communication and team building skills. This study was divided in to two main categories. The First one was theoretical knowledge sharing to the newcomers; Second part was practically experiencing what they are listing from librarians. This program had several hands-on trainings for Searching (Catalogue, e- Journals, Literatures, e- Theses,) Teaching method was Presentations and Mind Mapping. Introducing library materials and familiarizing to library classification and circulation databases are important lessons. Students from Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management and Faculty of Livestock Fisheries and Nutrition were selected. A questionnaire was used to collect data from students. Before library information and literacy program Data Analysis shows that both faculties' newcomers 100% had a basic knowledge about library. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of newcomers have idea about the different sections. Only two percent (2%) of student know about reference materials and fifteen percent (15%) of newcomers know about library Classification. Almost 98% newcomers had no idea about university library and its servicers. After program feedback evaluation shows that 100% students had idea about what is university library and how it circulating services among readers. Ninety-nine percent (99%) have identified that their most favorite part is mind mapping. Ninety-seven percent (97%) have search online databases and complete their task given from library. Ninety-nine percent (99%) have complete reference source searching (searching definition, finding keyword, using encyclopedias, glossaries and dictionaries).*

### **Introduction**

Information has become so important for decision making in today's world. In the present world information is added as the fifth need. With the rapid growth of the information society the ability of graduates to be information literate has become critically important. Students who enroll in higher education institutes are referred to as newcomers or freshers of that particular university. There are several definitions for the word newcomers according to Webster dictionary "one recently arrived", according to Cambridge dictionary "someone who has recently arrived in a place or recently become involved in an activity". Lanka Education .com says that in 2020 there are 30,000 new students enrolled to Sri Lankan 15 national universities, within this amount approximately 300 – 350 students entered to Wayamba University Makandura Premises, there are two Faculties namely Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management and Faculty of Livestock Fisheries and Nutrition awarding several degrees to fulfill national policy.

With Collaboration of all Wayamaba University academic librarians, a project was designed which increased students' information research skills, their awareness of other sources of technical information, and their communication and team building skills. This project was divided into two main categories. The First one was theoretical knowledge sharing to the newcomers; Second part was practically experiencing what they are listening to from librarians. This program had several hands-on training for Searching (Catalogue, e-

Journals, Literatures, e- Theses,) Teaching method was Presentations and Mind Mapping. Introducing library materials and familiarizing library classification and circulation databases are important lessons. Students from the Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management and Faculty of Livestock Fisheries and Nutrition were selected. A questionnaire was used to collect data from students.

### **Objectives**

Main objective of this study is to find out whether the library information literacy programs conducted by the library are absorbed by the newcomers of Wayamba University. In order to achieve the object the following categories are formulated.

- To identify the primary knowledge about Libraries and Resources
- To identify the Satisfaction of information literacy program done by library staff
- To identify the barriers and lacks from the students

### **Methodology**

Wayamba University library makandura premises completed a 4 days Library information literacy program with hands-on training and practical sessions. 361 newcomers participated in both faculties, Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management and Faculty of Livestock Fisheries and Nutrition.

A survey was conducted using a questionnaire to get the information on Usefulness of Library Information Literacy programs designed for the undergraduate's reference to the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. Two questionnaires were distributed among the students. The first questionnaire consists of awareness of any other libraries on school days, awareness of information sources, internet using tools, information searching tools and preference to gather information from. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of questions to identify the primary knowledge about Libraries and Resources, satisfaction of information literacy program done by library staff; Questionnaires were distributed before and after the program to collect primary data. Observations for practical sessions were also conducted to verify the answers. Collected data was tabulated and analyzed using scientific methods according to the objectives.

### **Result, discussions and Compare objectives with Results**

At the end of the information literacy program their performances in product as well as process is assessed by questionnaire to collect primary data from students. Before starting the library information and literacy program, collected data Analysis shows that both faculties' newcomers 100% had a basic knowledge about the library. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of newcomers have ideas about the different sections. Only two percent (2%) of students know about reference materials and fifteen percent (15%) of newcomers know about library Classification. Almost 98% of newcomers had no idea about the university library and its services. After the program feedback evaluation shows that 100% of students had an idea about what university library is and how it is circulating services among readers. Ninety-nine (99%) of participants mention that they got primary knowledge about Libraries and Resources. Ninety-nine percent (99%) have identified that their most favorite

part in this program is mind mapping. Ninety-seven percent (97%) have searched online databases and completed their tasks given during practical sessions. Ninety-nine percent (99%) have complete reference source searching (searching definition from textbook and encyclopedias, finding keyword, glossaries and dictionaries). Information literacy activity called Scavenger Hunt is a fun game to collect all information about the library randomly. Finally, all students are divided into several groups and each group has to complete a mind map using knowledge that they gathered from the information literacy program. Those are evidence to show that this program was the most effective, interesting and useful program to all newcomers of Wayamba University.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

It is important that libraries need to adopt changes happening due to ever changing technologies. In an academic library, librarians have many personal experiences with helping non-traditional students in all aspects of the library and analyzing how they benefit from understanding information literacy. They see non-traditional students struggling with general computer functionalities such as typing in a searchable web address to even making simple modifications to a Word document. On top of these occurrences, these students also need to be perceptive enough to search various library databases for information. It is clear how this would be a daunting task for someone that is not computer literate and how their frustrations would, at worst, lead to their ultimate withdrawal from school

The concept of information literacy is essential for student success and studying the concept will greatly benefit the field of education. Analyzing the usefulness of an information literacy program will lead to ideas being incorporated by other institutions seeking methods for increasing their student retention rates. Colleges and universities will recognize that offering information literacy workshops and assignments will shape students into successful researchers (Rapchak et al., 2015)

As methods to improve the perceptions of students towards the library it is suggested to give more emphasis on introducing modern facilities and services to newcomers and also to make more attractive programs for them.

- Introducing pre-recorded video programs and virtual tours on sections of the library.
- Students are more active with fun game and practical session when introducing electronic resources (e-databases , e-journals)
- Highlighting attractive and sometimes unique features and services in our library during the library tours as part of the library information literacy program.

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